789 824 rope was hung across the entrance of the family compound two times a year, on the 9th day of the 8th month, and on the 8th day of the 12th month. Along the rope, there were knotted blades of grass, also the san plant. The purpose is to frighten away evil spirits and evil doers. 283 One peculiarity of this twisted rice rope is that it is made in a different manner from the ordinary rope. The usual rope is a twist made by rolling the fibre between the palms to the right or away from the body. In this special rope, the roll is reversed and is to the left or toward the body. It is difficult for a person already skilled in the regular method. [193] This villager told of going to two noro priestesses in the village of Yabu who specialized in teaching this method of making ropes. The husband and the wife received instruction, paying about ¥40 for it because the wife believed in the efficacy of the practice. Each year at the proper times, the husband now makes the special rope himself.

787 791 184 Some fortune telling practices shade into religious beliefs, just as religious customs have also included soothsaying and divination. The noros and the Buddhist priests formerly practiced some fortune telling. There were no fortune tellers in any of the villages studied, but villagers occasionally consult them. Here, too, the patronage comes largely from the old and from the women. Younger people, if they know about them, regard these practices as superstitions unworthy of belief. The word meishin (superstition) is frequently heard among the young in describing customs and beliefs of the old. 791 [212] The sign of the fortune teller (sanjinsō) is the Chinese character for three written three times. These characters are said to signify the three states of existence, pre-natal, the present, and the afterlife, on all of which the fortune teller is well versed. Those in Hanashiro and Hinatogawa who wish to consult a fortune teller go to Itoman; those in Matsuda go to Nago. The cost is usually from ¥40-50 a visit. Typical reasons for a consultation with a fortune teller are: (1) to find out if an ill person will become well, (2) among the fishermen, to find out if the fishermen will return when an unexpected storm has arisen, (3) to discover if a present unhappiness has been caused by the evil deed of an ancestor and if this can be corrected, and (4) to find out the lucky days for such undertakings as marriages, building a house, or beginning new phases of construction.

782 794 Old women may utter a prayer on seeing a child fall, fearing that the child's spirit might escape because of surprise or fright. (This was observed in Hinatogawa).

798 In Matsuda, there were shelves for burning charcoal sticks in some of the numerous caves in the area. The nature of the worship could not be ascertained, but they may be offerings to deities of the cave.

514 [796] 782 778 Worship and prayers in the toilet seem to have completely disappeared. There were no personified toilet gods. The toilet apparently was the place in which thanks were given that a place for excrement had been provided. In all the villages, it was said to be an old belief which has now died out. There was no shelf or special place of worship in the toilet.

warned to be careful on days corresponding to their birth-years. A man who was a "bird person" could not go to participate in a bone-washing because it was held on a Day of the Bird. During the recurrence of one's birth-year, he must be cautious during the whole period. 805 527

The Western calendar was introduced into Okinawa after the Japanese annexation, but it is still referred to as the "new calendar". It is the calendar of the schools and government and of business, but not of the farmer. In the city the more important celebration of New Year's is held on the "new" New Year's; in the country it is on "old" New Year's a month later. 805 177

Before the Japanese annexation years were named in an absolute sequence (that is, besides being named by position in the cycles of twelve and of sixty) by the reigns of Chinese emperors. After the annexation the reigns of Japanese emperors were used. At the present time the Western chronology ('seireki') is official, but some still speak of the year 1954 as "Shōwa 29", the 29th year of the reign of the present emperor.

Birth and Infancy: Notions about Conception Okinawans recognize that sexual relations are necessary for but do not always result in conception. Younger people have heard of the struggle of the sperm to reach the egg, but their notions may be rather foggy. For example, a woman in her middle thirties, discussing the responsibilities of parents, argued in the following manner: a woman cannot conceive without having an orgasm; she cannot have an orgasm without feeling love ('aijō'); hence conception is the result of love, hence she should willingly take responsibility for her child. The ethical principle involved in this argument may not be typical, but the lack of precise information of physiology probably is. And it suggests two things: first, that women may inhibit their emotions as a contraceptive measure, and second, they may be willing to take chances in having sex relations thinking that they can inhibit conception. But it is worth noting here that young women do not discuss these matters very freely and hence generalizations may be very unsafe. 842

Condoms are sold in the cities but probably not in the country. A former country woman living in the city believed that country people would use them if they knew of them, but that they do not know. She regarded four children as enough. However, a young unmarried man from the city said that one would use a condom only when visiting a prostitute; it would be insulting to use one with your sweetheart. Some of this attitude may carry over after marriage.

Pregnancy If a woman believes that she may be pregnant she goes to a midwife for a diagnosis. This is usually about three months after her last menstrual period. The fee is usually ¥50. If she is in fact pregnant she continues to consult the midwife and the midwife attends her at the birth of the child. The total fee is about ¥1,000. 843 [759]

For the good of her unborn child a pregnant woman is urged to be happy and to avoid situations potentially harmful to it; for example if she were to go to a funeral or a bone-washing the shii, a sort of soul, of the baby might be drawn into the tomb. [974]

843 be drawn into the tomb. Some say the prospective father should also avoid these situations. Another set of observances has an easy delivery as its aim. The woman is urged to work hard and not to overeat so that the unborn child may not become too large. During the fifth month a "belly band" is wrapped tightly about her for the same purpose, especially to keep the head small.

A woman neither hides her pregnancy nor displays it unnecessarily--- if she is married and it is her husband's child. If this is not the case she may attempt to hide the fact. On the other hand if she is bearing what may be her husband's first son , she may be very pleased at the prospect, but she does not go out of her way to show it.

843 No clear statement was given to the effect that the "soul" enters the
774 body of the unborn child at a particular time, but statements are made about dangers to the shii of the child. One informant suggested that this soul-like
[841] entity enters the body of the mother during the third month and that for this reason a moxibustionist had refused to abort a woman after her third month had passed.

847 Abortion Abortions have always been and continue to be performed on Okinawa. The most frequent reason is said to be the desire not to bear an illegitimate child. An old-fashioned home method is to brew camphor-wood leaves and drink the brew or to burn the leaves and breathe the smoke. Experts in cautery are also believed to be able to cause an abortion by burning moxa on the proper areas of the body. But at the present time women are said to be aborted more frequently by midwives. The practice does not appear to be regarded as illegal.

844 Birth A woman tries to work up until the time of childbirth. If she has had several children already she knows when labor starts, how long it is likely to last, and may go out to the fields confident that she can return in time. Delivery is in the kucha, the back room of the house. Women of the family are present and men are not forbidden, though children are sent out. Often a woman's husband grasps her during delivery. Formerly she squatted on the floor holding a rope suspended from a house-beam above her. At present she is usually made to lie down. The labor is spoken of as "pain" but the woman must not cry out; she may only grunt when putting her strength into the ejection of the baby. If she were to cry out because of the pain she would later feel very ashamed---"because it is something that happens to every woman; people would talk about her."

Formerly the newly-born child was neither bathed nor dressed but simply
853 wrapped in an old kimono; now it is bathed in boiled water and dressed. The infant is permitted to nurse from about the fourth day on, after there is milk in the mother's breasts. Before this it may be given a little sugar in water and possibly allowed to suck a little colostrum about the second day after birth.

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846 Formerly the mother was kept in the kucha for about a week in front
[354] of a fire burning on the jiiru, an open hearth in country homes, a kind of brazier in the city.

192 any kind of body dirt or excretion, as mii-kusu, "sleep" in the eyes, haa-
[508] kusu, "stains on the teeth". As in Japanese it is used also in cursing; in
[774] anger an Okinawan may say, "I'll make you eat feces." A similar phrase,
[775] kusu takkwee, "eat feces", is often spoken after someone, especially a baby, sneezes. It is explained that the custom arose when a person once overheard two ghosts plotting to steal a baby's soul (mabui), which may be easily detached by a sneeze; one of the ghosts revealed that if a living person spoke the phrase it would be sufficient to drive him away. The fact that the phrase is used in anger suggests that it is an undesirable one; that it is used in the case of sneezing probably demonstrates the greater fear of ghosts.

831 Sex Practices and attitudes related to marriage have been discussed under that heading in Chapter V. The sex drive seems to be regarded as
864 natural and not sinful. Adults playfully tweak the penises of little boys and may put little children of both sexes to sleep by prolonged patting of the buttocks. They do not tell their children about the nature of sex and expect them not to know, yet the children hear much thinly-disguised discussion of sexual relationships and, sleeping with their parents as they do, may be vaguely aware of their parents' relations. Parents expect their children to learn of sex "naturally" as they grow older. As Maloney reports[1],
[839] there is little masturbation among small children, but two of Pitts' informants reported that adolescent boys sometimes hold masturbation contests to see who can ejaculate the fastest. This practice is said to stop with the beginning of heterosexual activity.

836 Formerly adolescents, except for girls of the gentry class, seem
883 to have had some sexual freedom. The practice of meeting in the fields at
178 night for parties, moo-ashibii, often led to sexual relations. According to informants in one community syphilis was brought in late in the last century through moo-ashibii with the youths of a neighboring village. Pre-marital sexual relations are probably frequent today, though the conditions under which young people meet are changing.

837 Married women are expected to have relations with only their hus-
548 bands, but married men are, in theory, limited only by their finances. There exists in the larger towns a relatively large class of women called juri, who function as both entertainers and prostitutes. (There is no distinction, like the Japanese distinction between 'geisha' and 'jorō'.) The
[178] juriinuyaa, "juri houses", were formerly centers of social life for the men of the city. The present 'ryōtei' have much the same function. A group of men may spend an evening there eating and drinking and being entertained by dancing and singing. If one chooses to remain and "buy a woman" his wife's only objection to it can be that it costs more money.

838 Homosexuality is evidently rare, but not unknown. A Naha woman reported that a Japanese who lived in a room next to hers was in the habit of luring young boys into his room with good food and then seducing them, sometimes to their physical discomfort. She said that some of the neighbors

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1 Maloney, 1945, p. 392.

Moreover, during the last days of the battle and for a period of nearly a year afterwards the Yamada people, like most other villagers in the vicinity, lived a concentration-camp sort of existence in the very crowded and unsanitary city of Ishikawa. Then when they returned to their village they had to rebuild their houses from materials given by the Americans and from salvage. This experience undoubtedly had a bad effect on morale and perhaps also on standards of cleanliness. Yet Yamada appears to be a cleaner village than many seen in Southern Okinawa. This may be because of its less dense concentration of houses and its fairly good water system.

Economic factors can be summed up in the single word "poverty". The most modern knowledge and the best intentions are not sufficient if one has to carry water from a distance, has no money for soap, and has little strength left after the daily grind of making a living.

3. The Supernatural and Disease

The Okinawans, like all peoples, have a large body of traditional knowledge about the ills of the body and what to do about them. As among many peoples with little contact with Western science, a great many illnesses are attributed to causes that we would call supernatural. Thus before one can understand the Okinawan view of diseases one must understand some of the Okinawan concepts of the supernatural.

Concepts of the Supernatural The living human being, according to Okinawan belief, contains two entities, the mabui (or mabuyaa, possibly related to Japanese 'mamori', "guardian") and the shii (pos. ident. with Japanese 'sei', "essence"). These correspond to the Western concept "soul". According to some informants the two are the same, but then further conversation reveals a difference in usage that must reflect a difference in concept. It appears that the mabui is a discrete entity capable of being dislodged from the body without death resulting immediately. The shii on the other hand appears to have more the nature of a force that can be augmented or diminished.

What happens after a person dies is not altogether clear (see also Chapter V). According to some he becomes a "Buddha" (Japanese 'hotoke'), according to others he becomes a "god" (Japanese 'kami-sama') and ascends to Heaven. This happens if all goes well, if the person dies in a normal manner and has left no important task undone, and if his family makes the proper offerings. However, if such is not the case, he may become a ghost and haunt this world. Several terms are used for dead persons in this latter form---yanamung ("bad thing"), yanakaji ("bad wind"), majimung (?), shininchu ("dead person"), shinigami ("dead god"), shinimabui ("dead mabui"). The last term, shinimabui, contrasts with ichimabui,("live mabui"), used for the displaced mabui of a living person. All of these terms seem to mean the same thing, the dead who are not cared for and who are therefore a potential danger.

The dead who are cared for are said to ascend to Heaven (in Japanese, 'Ten ni agaru'), but they may also be present in the tomb and at

'kami' is like the Oceanian "mana", a supernatural power that enters natural objects or persons.[1] Whatever may be the case in Japan, the Okinawan kami refers to definite beings, discrete entities, and not to a force. However, the concepts shiji and perhaps shii may be mana-like.

Causes of Disease Okinawans frequently use these concepts of the supernatural in their interpretation of the causes and proper treatment of illnesses of the body. Illness may be caused, they believe, by loss of the shii or the mabui, by the harmful inclinations of other living persons and of dead persons, and by offences to ancestors and other spirits that are ordinarily helpful.

Gradual withdrawal of the shii may cause illness or death. A pregnant woman is warned not to attend a funeral or a bone-washing because the shii of the unborn child may be drawn into the tomb. A sudden jolt or a scare may cause the mabui to be dislodged and this will result in a feeling of weakness and, if the mabui is not replaced, perhaps ultimately death. Treatment of loss of mabui is often practiced by old women. One woman who had treated her grandchildren on numerous occasions said that she laid on a table offerings including salt, rice, water, and a dish containing seven stones; then she took a garment of the sick child, prayed at the entrance to the house, and called the child's name. The mabui of the child then entered the garment and when she put the garment on the child the mabui reentered the child. Formerly she would have prayed at the pigsty-privy, but it no longer exists. One of her sons gave the interpretation that the pigsty-privy god being the lowest god knew the whereabouts of the lost mabui and he informed the ancestral spirits who were able to bring it back to the garment.

The most serious cases of loss of mabui are caused by the actual theft of the mabui by dead persons, who are said to take the mabui to the tomb. As I have already mentioned, this may happen when a baby sneezes. Treatment of this type of soul-loss probably requires the services of a yuta, a sort of shaman. The yuta is said to be able to see the living person's mabui before the tomb, in the form of the person. If the form is facing this world and looks sad there is a chance of recovery, but if it is facing the tomb and looks happy, the patient will probably die. But in spite of the occasional serious nature of loss of mabui, I have observed young boys when startled jokingly cry out "mabuyaa, mabuyaa!" as if to call back their displaced mabui. And it is said that some persons jokingly pretend to scoop it up and pour it back into the body through the head. However, the joke may serve to relieve actual tensions that exist after a sudden shock.

Little information was obtained on the harm that can be done by a living person with ichijama. According to Yanagida[2] the ichijama is the soul of a woman who can send it to possess a person or object in order to

1 Haring, 1946, p. 221 and elsewhere.

2 Yanagida, 1951, p. 30.